

THE "M-DISCUSSION"

A Guide To Help Returned Missionaries
Find Eternal Happiness
(i.e. a wife)

OUR RELATIONSHIP TO MARRIAGE

FOREWARD

In writing this booklet the author is in no way trying to belittle the institution of marriage or the missionary program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Rather, the attempt is being made to enjoy cultural differences which make us a "peculiar people."

—Michael G. Agrelius
Provo, Utah
1978

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MAIN IDEA

The Lord has given us an important commandment to follow in order that we may achieve a fullness of joy. Returned missionaries need to follow this commandment — but must follow with a partner (see D&C 131:2-4).

OBJECTIVE

At the conclusion of this discussion, Miss Brown will have a desire to become Mrs. R.M. Saint and will prepare herself to live with said "X-Missionary" forever.

OUTLINE

Concept 1: The returned missionary introduces himself and obtains a date.

Concept 2: The first date the returned missionary takes (including a discourse on the three "golden questions of dating").

Concept 3: A discussion on the importance of romance and of having only one boyfriend.

Marriage Challenge: Testify, challenge and commit.

Concept 4: A discussion on the necessity of proper marriage leading to eternal salvation.

Concept 1: The Introduction.

X-Missionary: I (make sure you don't say "we") am happy to meet with you tonight, Miss Brown. As you know I represent one of over 26,000 missionaries who have been away from girls for the past two years. Throughout my mission, whenever I have had important truths to communicate to girls I have revealed them through letters. Today I live in a time of great trouble and turmoil. I am confused, discouraged and searching for something better. In your own opinion, Miss Brown, why do you feel it will be helpful and important for you to go out with me?

Brown: Response

(If negative, try to determine why she feels it is not important to go out with you. You might ask the following:)

- I'm sure you have a very good reason for making me more confused and discouraged, Miss Brown. Would you mind sharing it with me? — Would you mind sharing it with me over dinner?
- I see you have some reservations about going out with me. I have some reservations also—for dinner, for two. Would 7:00 or 8:00 be more convenient for you?
- Let's suppose for a moment that you will go out with me. How do you feel this will affect the missionary you are writing? — Don't you feel it will give him more time to concentrate on the work he was sent to do?

* Picture of "X-Missionary" prior to leaving on mission (in jeans and t-shirt, perhaps with young girl hanging on him.)

X-Missionary: The very reason I am here is to help you feel the joy of knowing and appreciating me in a way which may be new to you. I particularly want you to know about myself. In 1829 I wasn't even born. But I was born in 19~~54~~⁷⁴ (fill in the year you were born). And in 19~~75~~⁷⁵ (fill in the year you began your mission) I was still a young man living in the state of happiness—in the United States. In my own words I'll give you the following account.*

There was in the place where I lived an unusual excitement on the subject of girls. . . . Indeed the whole district of the country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes of names used to fill my little black book, which created no small stir and division amongst the girls I was going out with, some crying, "Lo here!" and others, "Lo there!"

I was at this time in my eighteenth year. . . . During this time of great excitement my name was called up, by the bishop, to serious reflection and great uneasiness. Though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all of these girls, though I went out with several of them as often as occasion would permit. . . . So great was the confusion and strife among the different girls, that it was impossible for a person young as I was and so unacquainted with girls and things, to come to any certain conclusion as what to do.

While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by all these hassles, I was one day reading in the *New Era* when I came to a part which read, "Every young man should go on a mission." Never before has any *New Era* come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed to go on a mission I did, for how to act I did not know, and unless I could go on a mission I would never know.

At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion or do as the prophet directs, that is, go on a mission. I at length came to the determination to go on a mission, concluding that if my bishop found me ready I might venture.

* Passport type picture of X-Missionary.

* Regular missionary type picture (with companion) in front of some national monument.

*So, in accordance with this, my determination to go on a mission, I retired my little black book and made the attempt. It was on a beautiful morning early in the Spring (fill in the season in which you began your mission) of nineteen hundred and 75 (fill in the year). It was the first time in my life that I had been in the Missionary Home. For amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made such an attempt.

After I had travelled to the place where I was previously designed to go, having looked around me I found myself never to be alone for the next two years. I had obtained a twenty-four hour friend.*

I enjoyed a wonderful mission. And now I am back . . . left to ponder the marvelous things I have seen and heard.

I testify that I am back. In fact, the purpose of my visit tonight is to deliver to you this message and explain how you can know that I am true.

(This might seem to you to be a very good opportunity for you to invite Miss Brown to a private showing of the slides you took while on your mission. Try to resist this impulse. Wait until at least the second date, and even then limit the number of slides to only three hundred or so.)

** Picture of X-Missionary by himself with a box of chocolates in one hand and flowers in the other hand.*

** Picture of X-Missionary coming off plane with souvenirs in one hand and the standard works in the other.*

** Picture of X-Missionary in a very understanding, open yet confident mood.*

Concept 2: The First Date.

X-Missionary: It is a pleasure for me to be with you tonight Miss Brown. It gives me the opportunity to tell you that I know what a good time is, that is at a reasonable price, and that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is right down the road from the place we are going tonight.

Through such phone calls as the one I made last week, I have answered many of the questions that girls have asked about me. For example, Miss Brown, have you ever asked yourself, "Where did he come from?" "Why am I here?" or "Where are we going to after this date is over?"

Brown: Response (optional)

X-Missionary: Miss Brown, I testify to you that I called you last week to restore my dating habits. A major purpose of that phone call was to help each of us to prepare for that restoration. A knowledge of dating is essential to this restoration.

Dating can be learned from various sources. In our learning we need to remember three things: *first, man's wisdom alone is insufficient since you can't be alone when you're on a date; *second, I *am* a returned missionary; *third, I want you to know about me and will do everything I can to help you learn about me if you will ask me. The limitations of man's being alone can be illustrated with examples from science. Just five hundred years ago very few scientists went out on dates. Now we realize that the scientists of that day were mistaken.

(If negative, determine why. Some of the following questions may help:)

- Didn't your parents ever show their affection toward you by cuddling you now and then when you were little?
- Do you have reservations about my arm? This is the same arm that I used on my mission to knock on doors.

(If still questioned, quote passages from the pamphlet, "Why Stay Morally Clean" by Boyd K. Packer, then continue.)

** Picture of a silhouetted young couple with sunset in the background.*

(If negative, say:)

- You seem to have some reservations about romance, Miss Brown. Is that different to what you have previously been taught?*
- Miss Brown, do you have any friends about your age that have normal emotions toward returned missionaries? Could you introduce them to me? Give me their phone numbers?*

Just as loving parents like to put their arm around their children, I'd like to put my arm around you, Miss Brown. Would that be all right with you?

Brown: Response

(Make sure Miss Brown understands that you are a returned missionary and have no wrong motives in mind. If necessary show her your valid temple recommend.)

Concept 3: Total Romance requires much effort.

*X-Missionary: *Frequently our conscience reminds us that we are doing something right. Feelings of love can be beneficial when romance is the cause. Romance is the second basic principle of marriage. It is a marvelous opportunity that is extended to us through love. Through continual, sincere romance we can overcome all of our old romances and begin to like our present one all the more.*

(Bear testimony, relating a personal experience with the principle of romance. Do not divulge details of any serious girlfriends or anything too mushy.)

Miss Brown, have you experienced growth in your life through romance?

Brown: Response

X-Missionary: Do you feel a need to do so now?

Brown: Response

X-Missionary: (Testify of the effectiveness of romance in the life of every person. Then continue.)

Miss Brown, what are some of the blessings you see in sincere romance?

Brown: Response

X-Missionary: You know that I was truly expressing my love when I revealed that certain types of dating are not good for our bodies. The commandment known as the Word of Wisdom is very important in our dating, Miss Brown.

How would you feel if I took it upon myself to get drunk before a date?

Brown: Response

X-Missionary: In like manner, I would be displeased if you were to have cigarette breath, coffee stained teeth or a disproportionate figure due to overeating.

(Bear testimony about how rotten it is to kiss a girl after she has been smoking, how you appreciate white teeth and how much you dislike "moo-moo" dresses.)

Then as a girlfriend of mine do you feel you could keep this commandment, and strive to keep in good physical condition by continuing to live the Word of Wisdom for the rest of your life?

Brown: Response

X-Missionary: I testify to you that we will be blessed with wisdom, strength, protection and increased joy in our dating as we obey this commandment. In going out with me you will also want to abstain from other things — like old boyfriends. I would like to help you begin to receive these blessings as soon as possible. As a returned missionary, I invite you to abstain from these boyfriends beginning now. Will you do it?

Brown: Response

X-Missionary: Would it be helpful if I was to take a moment at the end of this discussion to help you dispose of any photos of these old boyfriends?

Brown: Response

(If she shows hesitation, be tactful but appropriately firm in encouraging her to show her commitment to wanting to be your girlfriend by disposing of harmful substances immediately.)

(The Marriage Challenge might be appropriate here.)

MARRIAGE CHALLENGE

Marriage Challenge

X-Missionary: While translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith . . . was married. The necessity of marriage became obvious to Joseph and Emma. Miss Brown, how do you feel in your heart about the divine institution of marriage?

Brown: Response (*Should be positive. If not, she is probably not ready for the challenge.*)

1 Corinthians 11:11 & 12; Ephesians 5:22-25; 1 Timothy 4:1-3;
D&C section 132.

Genesis 2:18,24; Matthew 19:4-8.

X-Missionary: An important part of the Lord's plan for our eternal progression is that each of us must marry. The importance of this was expressed by the apostle Paul. He taught that the man is not without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

The scriptures also teach that young people should marry. (*Read 1 Timothy 5:14.*) In other words, all men should hold the priesthood and all women should be married. Both the priesthood and marriage are universal. The Prophet Joseph (in speaking for the Lord) said, "And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of priesthood (meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage);" (D&C 131:2)

Isn't that a marvelous blessing, Miss Brown?

Brown: Response

X-Missionary: I want you to receive the Lord's full blessings and will do all I can to help you earn them. No one can be saved in the kingdom of God without receiving the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. The prophets teach that all men must be married. Even they are married to set the example. Will you please read Doctrine and Covenants section 49 verse 15?

Brown: Reads D&C 49:15

X-Missionary: Miss Brown, are you going to forbid to marry?

Brown: Response

X-Missionary: Then will you keep all the commandments of God and be married to someone who has the proper authority?

Brown: Response

X-Missionary: Marriage is important because it will bring joy in this life and eternal glory in the world to come. Let's read verse 16.

Brown: Reads D&C 49:16

MC-6

(If negative, try to strengthen her testimony. Show how any Latter-day Saint should see the significance of marriage. If necessary show her your temple recommend and ask if she wouldn't want to have one like it. If she does not accept the Marriage Challenge, say:) Miss Brown, I urge you to obey all of Heavenly Father's commandments that you may receive all of the blessings He has in store for you.

** Picture of the different temples.*

MC-7

X-Missionary: (If you feel she can accept the Marriage Challenge, say:) Miss Brown, I invite you to be ready for marriage to me, _____ (state your name) on _____ (date). Will you prepare for that date?

Brown: Response

X-Missionary: What can I help you do to prepare for that date? And by the way, which is your favorite temple? Why?*

Brown: Response (If not affectionate, check her pulse.)

(If negative, determine why. You might ask some of the following:)

- Do you have reservations about my last name? Would you like me to change it to Smith, Kimball or McConkie?
- Do you feel that marriage isn't important? Do you also have doubts about your mother and apple pie?
- Do you want a bigger engagement ring?
- Do you want to end up an old maid?

Concept 4: Proper Marriage is essential to salvation.

X-Missionary: True faith and romance must be followed by marriage in order to be acceptable by me. When we are married we make four important promises to each other: to take upon you my last name, to always remember me, to keep the house in order and to love me. In return, I promise to be a good guy and to help counsel you. Miss Brown, how do you feel about being Mrs. _____ (fill in your surname)?

(An engagement ring might be appropriate here.)

(If she has accepted the invitation to be married, confirm and commit. If not, give the Marriage Challenge at this point. Do not delay the invitation further.)

My feeling of love and concern for you makes me very happy that you are sincere in wanting to prepare for membership in my family. Your marriage to me will be one of the most significant events in your life as long as you can endure to **THE END.**

Reading Assignment

After Marriage, What?
1 Nephi 4:6

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P.O. Box 1252
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